

CULTURAL UNION



6 must-see highlights from 2024's PAD London Art + Design fair

Peter Martin · October 10, 2024

London's most elegant design fair returns to Berkeley Square for its 16 edition, showcasing the best of contemporary and 20th-century art, furniture and jewellery.

A chilly wind might be rustling through the upper branches of the international art scene but there was no sign of it at the ebullient collector's preview of [PAD London](#), the capital's chicest design and art fair, which has returned to London for its 16th edition. Like its Parisian sibling, PAD is less transatlantic than the Frieze fair opening a mile up the road yet is a major global showcase with a continental flavour, and a Franco-British kernel that is entirely its own.

Galleries come from as far afield as Thailand, South Korea and India; 16 countries in all are represented, exhibiting designers from over 25 countries. And it retains a sublime balance of innovative contemporary and top-drawer 20th-century design, punctuated with art and jewellery. PAD benefits from its Berkeley Square location – not that it needs the glamour, having plenty of its own – which roots it in the heart of London’s art district and social calendar. The preview looked and felt busy, with a strong mix of PAD regulars and new faces – both in the fairgoers and among the stalls, where 12 galleries are showing for the first time.



Laffanour Galerie Downtown won PAD’s 2024 Booth Prize (Photo by Sam Simpson/Dave Benett/Getty Images for PAD London)

Belgium – a design superpower – is in evidence, from the Calder tapestries at Galerie Hadjer (the US artist is much-championed by Belgian galleries) to the contemporary sculptural design of Objects With Narratives – whose stupendous new premises in Brussel’s Sablon district warrants a visit to the EU’s capital all on its own. Thai gallery Yoomoota – led by artist Taras Yoom – brings a fabulously shape-shifting dimension, while Paris’s Laffanour Galerie Downtown, which always has an eclectic and innovative blend of 20th-century design, won PAD’s 2024 Booth Prize. Florian Daguet-Bresson (Paris) again brought a superlative selection of contemporary ceramics – as did London’s Adrian Sassoon; while newcomers Brazil Modernist (Paris) brought fine examples of pieces by Oscar Niemeyer and Joaquim Tenreiro. And as she did last year, Rose Uniacke (pictured top, image by Genevieve Lutkin) again brought one of the most attractive booths to PAD – its apartment vibes designed to “make you understand how life can work with the pieces”.

Here are some of the galleries that particularly caught our eye this year:

Bryan O'Sullivan



The Bryan O'Sullivan stand at PAD London 2024, with the Hanami pendant lights and (left) the Baloo armchair (Photo: James McDonald)

Many will know Bryan O'Sullivan as a top-tier interior designer, with significant teams in London and New York, and whose celebrated works include superyachts, Claridge's Restaurant and the now-iconic Berkeley Bar. But O'Sullivan has also been carving out an impressive reputation for his collection of vintage French and Italian-influenced contemporary design pieces, a selection of which are on view at his booth at PAD. These include a beguiling pair of light fittings – the Hanami and Hanami Mini – which, O'Sullivan explains, are created from brass cast in Portugal and blown glass from Italy. They are beautifully conceived, with a delicate touch that is very French, an organic biophilic sensibility, and a good dose of Italian glamour.

Then there is the Baloo armchair. The first thing to say is that it's absurdly comfortable – sprung in all the right places to just the right level of firmness. But it's also an artful blend of playfulness – with its brass feet not unlike tusks – and an angularity of form that recalls Gio Ponti. On the basis of these pieces alone, Bryan O'Sullivan is onto something special.

Objects With Narratives



The Objects With Narratives booth at PAD London 2024. On the right is the Aquilon Bar Cabinet by Maison Jonckers (Photo: Tijs Verveckken)

It's only two years since brothers Robbe and Nik Vandewyngaerde and their friend Oskar Eryatmaz founded Objects with Narratives, yet the gallery has already asserted themselves as a major force of contemporary sculptural design, with seminal pieces in stone and metal by designers such as Eziquiel Pini and Ben Storms. Their new permanent gallery in Brussel's Sablon is a stunning space, yet they are also a great fit with design fairs such as PAD, their head-turning monumental pieces a natural draw for the passing crowds.



Objects With Narratives at PAD London 2024: left to right: Crushed Console Belge Noir by Ben Storms; Tatau side tables by Maison Jonckers; detail from inside of the Aquilon Bar Cabinet by Maison Jonckers (Photos: Tijs Verveckken)

This year, the gallery has composed a collection entitled The (Im-)Perfectionists, featuring work such as the Aquilon Bar Cabinet by Maison Jonckers – a monumental bronze cabinet which leans into this idea of imperfection, with Wabi Sabi-esque etchings, rough edges and asymmetric doors. The overall effect is highly pleasing – heavy doors swing effortlessly on their hinges to reveal an interior with notes of gold and bronze, incorporating swivelling shelves and ice buckets.

Also by Maison Jonckers is a lovely pair of Tatau side tables, one in black oxidised bronze, the other in a tactile, translucent honey onyx. And particularly impressive is the Crushed Console Belge Noir by Ben Storms – a designer who is perfectly matched with the gallery and who has his own floor in their Sablon gallery. The Console is a striking contrast between the geometrically straight lines of the onyx top and the fractured, crushed appearance of the blackened stainless steel body.

Willy Rizzo



The Willy Rizzo booth at PAD London 2024, featuring (left) gaming table; (centre) the Presidential Desk in brushed stainless steel and (right) the SC-115 music system

There's something about the mid-century Italian and French glamour of Willy Rizzo that is quintessentially PAD. Willy Rizzo (1928-2013) was a celebrated Italian photographer and designer, active from the 1940s through to the 2000s, though particularly associated with the golden years of the 60s and 70s – and he's left a legacy of fine design that has been nurtured by his French wife Dominique Rizzo and their children. Under their guidance, the studio continues to thrive – items such as their circular revolving coffee table, Love Lamps, games tables and insanely cool SC-115 music system are design classics lusted after by film stars, rock stars and tech titans. And showing for the first time at PAD is the Presidential Desk – a cubist desk in brushed stainless steel, matt lacquered in a fabulous scarlet red, which, as Dominique points out, looks straightforward on first glance, but rewards further inspection with its many quirks and unexpected asymmetric devices.

Nilufar



Nilufar booth in PAD London 2024, with the Directional chest on the left wall, Crespini lamp to the left of the tree and copper alloy chairs by Shlomo Harush on the right (Photo: Stephane Aboudaram @wearecontents)

Nina Yashar founded Nilufar in 1979; since then, the gallery has become a major force in design, from their original home in Milan to New York – where they recently collaborated with The Future Perfect.

As with last year's PAD London, Nilufar has a double presence here: the Vikram Goyal X Nilufar booth – a collaboration with the Goyal, a brilliant New Delhi designer with a focus on monumental metal furniture – and Nilufar's own booth. This year, the gallery is showing a blend of fine mid-century design and contemporary sculptural pieces. Mid-century standouts include a fine and elegant Capri table in Brazilian rosewood by Jorge Zalsupin with a 1970s Gabriella Crespini table lamp placed upon it; and a Directional chest of drawers in rattan and marble. Contemporary highlights include a low cuboid Metamorphosis table by Allegra Hicks in crocheted bronze and a series of Artwork copper alloy chairs by Shlomo Harush.

Gallery FUMI



Gallery FUMI at PAD London 2024, with the bronze Cloud Chair by Voukenas Petrides in the foreground and Lumia floor lamp by Jeremy Anderson on the back wall

Gallery Fumi was the star of last year's Design Miami, where they deservedly won the Best Gallery Presentation award. And this year's PAD booth – in FUMI's home city – does not disappoint. A Lumia floor lamp by New York-based ceramicist Jeremy Anderson – whose Space Relics wowed in Miami – stands at the entrance, setting the scene with its future-tribal panache.



Emma Witter's oyster shell in pearl, resin and copper at Gallery FUMI

The Cloud Chair by Voukenas Petrides in dazzling polished bronze has undeniable hero energy. It's fun and fabulous while asserting itself as a serious piece of sculptural art. And there's a wonderful delicacy to Emma Witter's oyster shell in pearl, resin and copper. It's clear from their PAD London booth that the gallery formed back in 2008 by Sam Pratt and Valerio Capo has lost absolutely none of its energy along the way.

Portuondo Gallery



Portuondo Gallery at PAD London 2024 with the Francisco Ferreras painting on the left wall and Jean Yves Lanvin brass coffee table

Visitors to PAD London will note that there are two Portuondo Galleries – the London gallery, based on the Pimlico Road with a presence in New York and Madrid, run by brothers Hugo and Diego Portuondo; and a separate Paris-based Galerie Portuondo, run by their cousin Horacio and his wife Julia – who designs exceptional gold jewellery under the brand name Julia Muñoz.

Hugo and Diego always bring an exquisite collection of mid-century and contemporary pieces to the fairs they exhibit at, including some serious artwork and tapestry finds. Standouts today include a fantastic modular coffee table in polished cast brass by Jean Yves Lanvin and an outstanding 1957 geometric abstraction painting by Francisco Ferreras. Bookending the display are two totemic pieces: a 1968 Taureau Totem by Robert and Jean Cloutier and a contemporary French Miro-esque totemic sculpture.